

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 02589 030713Z

22

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /071 W
----- 100408

R 021612Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3664

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2589

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, NI

SUBJECT: THINGS SLOWLY RETURNING TO NORMAL AFTER ABORTIVE COUP

REF: LAGOS 2103

SUMMARY: ALMOST THREE WEEKS AFTER THE ABORTIVE COUP OF
FEBRUARY 13 WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF NIGERIA'S HEAD OF
STATE GENERAL MURTALA MUHAMMED, THE COUNTRY IS MAKING SLOW PROGRESS
TOWARD A RETURN TO NORMAL. SPECIAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS CONTINUE
IN FORCE AS THE FMG'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE PLOT MOVES FORWARD,
AND THE RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) UNDER LT. GEN.
OBASANJO IS WORKING HARD TO ESTABLISH ITS LEGITIMACY WITH THE COUNTR-
Y'S TRADITIONAL RULERS. THE TEMPER OF THE POPULACE HAS
APPARENTLY COOLED SOMEWHAT, AND THE FEARS OF TRIBAL OR RELIGIOUS
UNREST HAVE RECEDED FOR THE TIME BEING. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 02589 030713Z

1. SOME EIGHTEEN DAYS AFTER GENERAL MUHAMMED WAS ASSASSINATED IN AN ABORTIVE COUP, INVESTIGATION INTO THE COUP PLOT CONTINUES AMID UNCONFIRMED BUT PERSISTENT REPORTS THAT SOME TWO HUNDRED OFFICERS, INCLUDING SOME TOP FIGURES SUCH AS COMMISSIONER FOR DEFENSE BISSALA, ARE UNDER ARREST AND SUSPECTED OF HAVING BEEN IMPLICATED IN THE COUP. THE FMG IS STILL LOOKING FOR THE REPUTED COUP LEADER, DIMKA, AND TWO OTHER ASSOCIATES (LAGOS 2339) WHO REMAIN AT LARGE. THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS REMAIN CLOSED TO OVERLAND TRAFFIC; THE CURFEW IN THE LAGOS AREA CONTINUES; AND THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS ARE IN OPERATION ONLY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. IT IS CLEAR THAT SECURITY IS A PRIMARY CONCERN OF THE SMC AT THE PRESENT TIME, A FACTOR WHICH THE COUNTRY'S PRESS CONTINUES TO HIGHLIGHT WITH ITS REPEATED CHARGES OF FOREIGN COMPLICITY AND CALLS FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE FOREIGN PRESENCE IN NIGERIA.

2. THE SMC UNDER THE COUNTRY'S NEW HEAD OF STATE LT. GEN. O. OBASANJO IS STRIVING TO ESTABLISH ITS LEGITIMACY WITH THE COUNTRY'S TRADITIONAL RULERS AND POPULACE. ALMOST DAILY, THE INFORMATION MEDIA REPORT THE ARRIVAL AT DODAN BARRACKS OF YET ANOTHER DELEGATION OF TRADITIONAL RULERS WHO CONFER WITH OBASANJO AND PLEDGE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE FMG. THE NEWLY APPOINTED CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME HEAD-QUARTERS, BRIGADIER SHEHU YAR A'DUA, IS GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION IN THE COVERAGE OF THESE MEETINGS, AS EVIDENCE OF MILITARY SOLIDARITY AND ASSURANCE OF THE "HOLY NORTH'S" CONTINUED PROMINENCE IN HIGH COUNCILS OF THE FMG. THE SULTAN OF SOKOTO HEADED ONE LARGE DELEGATION FROM THE NORTH AND GROUPS FROM KWARA, FORMER NORTH EAST AND EAST CENTRAL STATES HAVE ALSO MADE THE TRIP TO LAGOS.

3. COMMENT: WHILE MANY OBSERVERS HERE ARE NOT CONVENCED THAT WE YET HAVE THE FULL STORY OF WHAT OR WHO MOTIVATED DIMKA TO ATTEMPT HIS COUP (LAGOS 2056), IT DOES APPEAR THAT THE FMG HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS TOWARD ITS TWO IMMEDIATE GOALS OF REASSERTING ITS AUTHORITY AND OF CALMING TRIBAL TENSIONS. IF THE COUP PLOT INVOLVED AS MANY OFFICERS AS RUMOR HAS IT, ONE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THAT GREATER ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TO MILITARY AMENITIES, THE VIEWS OF YOUNGER OFFICERS, PROMOTIONS AND MILITARY REORGANIZATION. IN ADDITION, THE SMC AND OBASANJO ARE CLEARLY SEEKING TO FORGE VIABLE LINKS WITH TRADITIONAL CENTERS OF POWER. WHETHER OBASANJO'S (AND BY IMPLICATION THE SMC'S) ANNOUNCED INTENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 02589 030713Z

CONTINUE WITH MUHAMMED'S INTERNAL POLICIES WEATHERS THESE CURRENT NEGOTIATING SESSIONS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. AMONG POSSIBLE SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION DURING THESE MEETINGS ARE THE TREND TO GIVE MORE POWER TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATES AND THE SINCERITY OF THE SMC'S PLANS TO RETURN THE COUNTRY TO CIVILIAN RULE. WHILE NIGERIA IS THUS ENTERING A FURTHER PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT, SHAKEDOWN, AND BARGAINING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECALL THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC GENERALLY APPROVED OF MUHAMMED'S

POLICIES AND WAS NOT PREPARED TO SUPPORT HIS OVERTHROW.
EASUM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, POLITICAL STABILITY, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS02589
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760080-0463
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197603105/aaaadoff.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LAGOS 2103
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <10 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THINGS SLOWLY RETURNING TO NORMAL AFTER ABORTIVE COUP
TAGS: PINS, NI, (OBASANJO, OLUSEGUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006